Each situation is unique and the police officer must alter his or her response to fit the circumstances.

**Generally, a Police Officer:**

- Will provide his or her name upon request.
- A police officer who is not in uniform will present proper identification; you may request to examine their credentials so that you are satisfied they are a law enforcement officer.
- Will inform a person of the reason for being stopped.
- Will only use the force necessary to effect the arrest of a suspect and to prevent an escape.
- Will only arrest a person for a crime committed in the officer’s presence, or when the officer has probable cause to believe the person has already committed the crime.

**Questions, Compliments, Complaints**

- If you have a question about procedures or a complaint about your treatment, contact the Sheriff’s Office and ask to speak with a supervisor.
- You may also send a letter of compliment if you feel the officer was particularly helpful in your situation.
- You may visit our website and use one of the “contact us” links.

The information contained in this pamphlet is provided to you by the Washington County Sheriff’s Office Traffic Safety Unit.

We hope the information will be helpful in answering common questions about traffic stop procedures and in reducing stress if you are stopped by law enforcement.

**Important Phone Numbers**

- Emergency ........................................ 9-1-1
- Non Emergency ..................... 503-629-0111
- Alarm Permits ......................... 503-846-2519
- Civil Division ......................... 503-846-2537
- Concealed Handguns ............ 503-846-2761
- Crime Prevention ............... 503-846-2579
- Detectives ......................... 503-846-2500
- East Precinct ...................... 503-846-5900
- Jail .................................. 503-846-2600
- General Information ........ 503-846-2700
- Patrol ............................. 503-846-2784
- Records .............................. 503-846-2700
- Volunteer Coordinator ....... 503-846-2525
- Warrants .............................. 503-846-2526
- Westside Interagency Narcotics ............... 503-846-5650

Information provided by

**Washington County Sheriff’s Office**

215 SW Adams Avenue, MS 32
Hillsboro, OR 97123-3874
Why do Police Stop People?

There are many different reasons why you might be stopped by the police. Whatever the reason, the officer needs your cooperation.

• You may have committed a traffic violation.
• You may fit the description of a suspect.
• The officer might think you are in trouble and need help.

If you are stopped by the police while driving, you may feel confused, anxious, or even angry. These are natural feelings, but remember, traffic stops can also be stressful and dangerous for the police officer. Each year, a number of law enforcement officers are killed or seriously injured while making a “routine traffic stop.” Police officers are especially vulnerable during the hours of darkness.

With this in mind, there are things that you, as a law abiding citizen, can do to help make the experience more positive.

When Stopped by the Police Remember:

• A police officer may pull you over at any time for a traffic offense or police investigation.
• When you see the red and blue overhead lights or hear the siren, remain calm and safely pull over parallel to the right side of the road and stop in a safe location.
• Remain in your vehicle, unless the officer advises otherwise
• Keep your hands on the steering wheel, or in plain sight so the officer can see them.
• Avoid any sudden movements, especially toward the floorboard, rear seat or passenger side of the vehicle, or to consoles between seats.
• Do not immediately reach for your license or other documents until the officer requests them. Oregon law requires drivers to show their license, registration and insurance card upon request.
• If your documents are out of reach, tell the officer where they are before you reach for them.
• If the stop occurs during darkness, put on your dome or interior lights so the officer can easily see that all is in order.
• If there are passengers in your vehicle, encourage them to remain quiet and cooperate with instructions.
• The officer may issue you a ticket. If you feel the reason is vague or unclear, ask the officer for details.
• Avoid becoming argumentative. Arguing will not change the officer’s mind. If you contest the violation, you will have an opportunity to address the matter in court.
• Be honest with the officer. If you really did not see the stop sign, or were unaware of the speed limit, let the officer know. Being honest about the situation never hurts.
• Many departments use one-man patrol cars, especially in the suburbs. It would be normal to see two or three marked units on a routine traffic stop.
• Finally, if you receive a ticket, accept it calmly. Accepting it is not an admission of guilt.

Rev. 12/2011